

U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 09/822,230
Amendment filed December 21, 2004
Reply to OA dated September 21, 2004

REMARKS:

Claims 1-7 are currently being considered, of which claims 1-3 have been amended. No new claims have been added. Applicants believe that no new matter has been introduced. The Examiner has indicated that claims 3-7 set forth allowable subject matter.

The Examiner has rejected claim 1 under the second paragraph of 35 USC 112 because of a noted informality. In particular, the Examiner has suggested that claim 1 is indefinite due to aspects relating to the language "heat generator disposed as opposed to the outlet". Claim 1 has been amended to further clarify the present claimed invention regarding the noted informality. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that this rejection should be withdrawn.

The Examiner has objected to claims 3-7, and has indicated that claims 3-7 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including features of intervening claims.

Claim 3 has been amended to incorporate features of claims 1 and 2. Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the objection to claims should be withdrawn, and that the following claims are now in condition for allowance: 3, 4, 5/3, 5/4, 6/3, 6/4, 7/6/3, and 7/6/4.

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Before turning to the cited art, a brief review of the present invention is in order. In the present invention, the hot air duct 12 includes inner duct portion extending through wall 27 of gasifying tank 11 and having an open end providing outlet 33; the tank 11 has an outer duct portion 21,22 surrounding at least a portion of the inner duct portion and spaced apart from inner duct portion to form a double duct structure; the inner and outer duct portions are disposed concentrically; the hot air source 37 supplies hot air directly to inner duct portion through inlet 36; and the outer duct portion 21,22 provides gas discharge opening 24.

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as anticipated by USP 5,997,827 (**Mezger**).

Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

The Examiner has suggested that **Mezger** anticipates the following features of claim 2 as originally filed: “the outlet of the hot air duct and the heat generator are surrounded by a closed gasifying tank”, in combination with the other claimed features.

Applicants respectfully disagree with the Examiner.

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Mezger fails to anticipate a heat generator surrounded by a closed gasifying tank. A hot air feed and steam jackets 3, 5, and 11 are shown in Figure 1 of **Mezger**. None of those elements are described by **Mezger** as being “surrounded by a closed gasifying tank”.

Mezger fails to describe, teach, or suggest the following features of claims 1 and 2, as amended: “at least the outlet of the hot air duct and the heat generator are surrounded by a closed gasifying tank”, in combination with the other claimed features.

Thus, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of claims 1 and 2 should be withdrawn.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, claims 1-7, as amended, are in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

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In the event that this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. Please charge any fees for such an extension of time and any other fees which may be due with respect to this paper, to Deposit Account No. 01-2340.

Respectfully submitted,

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